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THE FORMATIVE YEARS
Consultation Paper

- Issues and Options and Response Guide
- Working Paper

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Restructuring of Education
Consultation Phase 1
June 1990

THE FORMATIVE YEARS

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THE FORMATIVE YEARS WORK TEAM

The Ministry of Education wishes to acknowledge the contribution of the following persons who participated in the development of The Formative Years Issues and Options and Response Guide and The Formative Years Working Paper.

Through the consultation process, the Formative Years Work Team will develop policy recommendations for the first six years of compulsory education.

Elizabeth Terry (Chair)	Curriculum Policy Development Branch Ministry of Education
Joan Fallis	Norfolk Board of Education
David Goldman	Essex County Board of Education
Carolyn McCann	Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic Separate School Board
Susan Pekilis	Policy Analysis And Research Branch Ministry of Education
Ginette Plourde	Learning Programs Secretariat Ministry of Education
Burle Summers	Hastings County Board of Education

Ontario

Deputy Minister
Sous-ministre

Ministry
of
Education

Ministère
de
l'Éducation

(416) 965-2605

Mowat Block
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1L2

Édifice Mowat
Queen's Park
Toronto (Ontario)
M7A 1L2

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY MINISTER

In the April 1989 Speech from the Throne, the Government of Ontario announced a major set of initiatives to restructure and enhance the quality of education in Ontario in order to realize both the economic potential of the province and the individual potential of its people. In response to this announcement, the Ministry of Education established a Learning Programs Secretariat to manage the restructuring initiatives. Restructuring will occur through a planned consultation process involving all partners in education. The consultation process is intended to facilitate discussion and collaborative planning on policy options.

To develop issues and policy options for each of the consultation areas, work teams composed of representatives of school boards, professional associations and the Ministry of Education have been formed by the Secretariat. As part of the consultation process, these work teams will be interacting on an ongoing basis with ministry-formed reaction groups representing a wide diversity of interests. Many other groups and individuals will also be involved in the consultation process to ensure involvement on a broad base.

The following issues and options and the working paper have been developed by the Formative Years Work Team. Through the consultation process, the Formative Years Work Team will develop policy recommendations for the first six years of compulsory education.

I invite you to be a part of the consultation process by being actively involved in the analysis of these issues and policy options. Your participation, reactions and recommendations are vital in building partnerships toward meaningful change. If you have any questions on the consultation process, please contact Mr. Pat Fleck of the Learning Programs Secretariat at 965-3074.

R L Mitton

Robert L. Mitton
Deputy Minister

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Issues and Options and Response Guide

June 1990

THE FORMATIVE YEARS

RESPONSE GUIDE

The issues and policy options in this response guide have been prepared by the Formative Years Work Team for consultation on the first six years of compulsory education. These issues and options have been developed as reference points for examination and dialogue that will aid in the development of policy for the first six years of compulsory education. For each issue the Formative Years Work Team has identified a list of options to encourage dialogue concerning alternative courses of action. It is expected that these issues will be refined and added to throughout the consultation process and that other options will be developed as ideas are shared.

Accompanying this response guide is a working paper which provides a context for the issues and options. It is based upon information available from The Formative Years renewal study started in the spring of 1988. It includes ideas related to curriculum and school practices in The Formative Years. It is a framework for discussion that invites comments and suggestions. Both this response guide and the working paper may be duplicated to support the consultation process.

All school boards, associations and individuals are invited to be involved in this stage of the Formative Years Consultation Process by reviewing this guide and submitting a response. All submissions will be studied and analyzed by the Formative Years Work Team as they develop a revised consultation paper that will be the focus of the next phase of consultation. To facilitate processing, please submit your response as soon as possible and no later than December 31, 1990.

Please forward responses:

Elizabeth Terry
c/o The Formative Years Work Team
Curriculum Policy Development Branch
16th Floor
Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1L2

RESPONDENT INFORMATION

Please complete this page and attach to your submission.

Name: (full name of the representative group, where applicable)

_____

Address: _____

_____

Contact Person: _____ Telephone: _____

Please ☑ in appropriate space.

1. ☐ Educators' association
2. ☐ Trustees' association
3. ☐ Faculty of Education
4. ☐ A personal response
5. ☐ Parents' association
6. ☐ School staff
7. ☐ School board
8. ☐ Other organization

How many people had input into the preparation of this response? _____

Where applicable, please indicate the division(s) represented.

JK/SK _____ Primary _____ Junior _____

Intermediate _____ Senior _____ Other _____

Please forward responses no later than December 31, 1990:

Elizabeth Terry
c/o The Formative Years Work Team 965 - 8948
Curriculum Policy Development Branch
16th Floor
Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1L2

THE FORMATIVE YEARS

ISSUES AND OPTIONS

The Formative Years, 1975, outlines policy for education in the Primary and Junior Divisions of Ontario schools. This policy document and other existing Ontario education policies are now being examined as part of the restructuring initiatives. The following pages focus on eight issues identified by the Formative Years Work Team. These issues relate to the restructuring of education in the formative years and suggest some optional ways of responding to these issues. The Working Paper, Educating Children in Their Formative Years, 1990, sets a context for these issues and suggests some possibilities for policy change.

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ISSUE 1: BASIC LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Context

- All children need to have certain knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to operate successfully in society and develop self-esteem
- The basic learning expectations for children should be clear to both parents and educators
- Provincial consistency in basic expectations for children's learning supports program planning, aids transitions through divisions and facilitates reporting to parents
- World economic, societal and cultural changes have influenced learning expectations
- Literacy, numeracy and technology have a renewed emphasis in the expectations for children's learning
- The learning expectations for children should reflect learning as a life-long process
- Knowledge resulting from education research has influenced educators' expectations for children's learning
- There is a broader recognition of the interrelationship of various areas of study and cross-curricular learning
- The Working Paper, Educating Children in Their Formative Years, 1990, (pages 10 to 19), includes suggested aims as basic expectations for children's learning

ISSUE 1: WHAT SHOULD BE THE BASIC LEARNING EXPECTATIONS FOR CHILDREN IN THE FORMATIVE YEARS?

Option 1.1

Adopt the suggested aims of the working paper as basic expectations for children's learning

Option 1.2

Amend the suggested aims of the working paper as basic expectations for children's learning

Option 1.3

Use an alternative description of aims as basic expectations for children's learning

ISSUE 1: WHAT SHOULD BE THE BASIC LEARNING EXPECTATIONS FOR CHILDREN IN THE FORMATIVE YEARS?

Please circle and comment on your preferred option: 1.1, 1.2, or 1.3. Additional comments, including alternative options, may be attached.

Option 1.1 **Adopt the suggested aims of the working paper as basic expectations for children's learning.**

Option 1.2 **Amend the suggested aims of the working paper as basic expectations for children's learning. Please list your suggestions.**

Option 1.3 **Use an alternative description of aims as basic expectations for children's learning. Please list your suggestions.**

Comments on Preferred Option

Other Comments

ISSUE 2: DIVISIONAL ORGANIZATION

Context

- The April 1989 Speech from the Throne identified Junior and Senior Kindergarten as The Early Years and the first six years of compulsory education as The Formative Years
- The Formative Years Working Paper considers the first three years of compulsory education as the Primary Division and the next three years as the Junior Division
- The existing Formative Years, 1975, document includes general policy statements applying to the formative years as a single unit, as well as statements applying to divisions separately
- The current policy document, Science is Happening Here, includes separate learning opportunities for each division
- There is a concern that the program in The Formative Years be manageable for teachers and coherent for students
- The structure and organization of The Formative Years must be sensitive to the developmental patterns of children
- The organization of The Formative Years policy must recognize and facilitate progress from The Early Years through The Formative Years and into The Transition Years

ISSUE 2: WHAT DIVISIONAL ORGANIZATION SHOULD BE USED FOR THE DESCRIPTION OF THE FORMATIVE YEARS POLICY AND CURRICULUM?

Option 2.1

Develop all policy and curriculum documents for The Formative Years as a single unit without discriminating between the Primary and Junior Divisions

Option 2.2

Develop all policy and curriculum documents for The Formative Years discriminating between the Primary and Junior Divisions

Option 2.3

Develop policy for The Formative Years as a single unit and develop curriculum documents discriminating between the Primary and Junior Divisions

ISSUE 2: WHAT DIVISIONAL ORGANIZATION SHOULD BE USED FOR THE DESCRIPTION OF THE FORMATIVE YEARS POLICY AND CURRICULUM?

Please circle and comment on your preferred option: 2.1, 2.2, or 2.3. Additional comments, including alternative options, may be attached.

Option 2.1 **Develop all policy and curriculum documents for The Formative Years as a single unit without discriminating between the Primary and Junior Divisions.**

Option 2.2 **Develop all policy and curriculum documents for The Formative Years discriminating between the Primary and Junior Divisions.**

Option 2.3 **Develop policy for The Formative Years as a single unit and develop curriculum documents discriminating between the Primary and Junior Divisions.**

Comments on Preferred Option

Other Comments

ISSUE 3: PROVINCIAL CURRICULUM DESCRIPTION

Context

- Since 1975, Ontario curriculum for the Primary and Junior Divisions has been organized into the three broad areas of Communications, Arts, and Environmental Studies with some subject description
- There are many alternate means of organizing learning expectations into curriculum areas
- Organization of curriculum into areas and subjects is a framework for adult reference and curriculum planning
- There is a need to reconsider curriculum organization in light of a broader recognition of cross-curricular learning, of the interrelationship of various areas of study, and research in individual subject areas
- Organization of curriculum into broad areas of study assists in the provision of cross-curricular and integrated instruction
- Organization of curriculum should facilitate integrated, interrelated instruction
- The Working Paper, Educating Children in Their Formative Years, 1990, (pages 10 to 19), organizes learning into four broad curriculum areas with specific subjects under each

ISSUE 3: HOW SHOULD PROVINCIAL CURRICULUM BE ORGANIZED AND DESCRIBED?

Option 3.1

Continue with the existing provincial curriculum organization

Option 3.2

Use broad areas with subjects as in The Working Paper, Educating Children in Their Formative Years, 1990, (pages 10 - 19)

Option 3.3

Use an alternative categorization of broad areas and subjects

Option 3.4

Use an alternative categorization of broad areas with no subject designations

ISSUE 3: HOW SHOULD PROVINCIAL CURRICULUM BE ORGANIZED AND DESCRIBED FOR EDUCATOR AND PUBLIC REFERENCE?

Please circle and comment on your preferred option: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, or 3.4. Additional comments, including alternative options, may be attached.

Option 3.1 **Continue with the existing provincial curriculum organization (i.e. Communications, Arts, Environmental Studies).**

Option 3.2 **Use broad areas with subjects as in The Working Paper, Educating Children in Their Formative Years, 1990 (pages 10 to 19).**

Option 3.3 **Use an alternative categorization of broad areas and subjects. Please list your suggestions.**

Option 3.4 **Use an alternative categorization of broad areas with no subject designations. Please list your suggestions.**

Comments on Preferred Option

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Other Comments

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ISSUE 4: DEVELOPMENT OF PROVINCIAL CURRICULUM DOCUMENTS

Context

- Existing provincial curriculum documents for children in the Primary and Junior Divisions consist of a policy circular, The Formative Years, 1975, Education in the Primary and Junior Divisions, 1975, and other support and resource materials
- Science is Happening Here, 1988 is a policy document outlining one given area of study
- School boards develop local curriculum materials based on ministry policy and local needs
- There is current interest in developing more provincial curriculum guidelines
- A provincial policy circular will be developed to replace The Formative Years, 1975
- Provincial policy documents for all curriculum areas would provide consistent guidelines across Ontario

ISSUE 4: WHAT PROVINCIAL CURRICULUM DOCUMENTS SHOULD BE DEVELOPED?

Option 4.1

Develop only a provincial policy circular

Option 4.2

Develop a provincial policy circular and policy guidelines for all curriculum areas as determined in Issue 2

Option 4.3

Develop a provincial policy circular and policy guidelines for selected curricular areas

ISSUE 4: WHAT PROVINCIAL CURRICULUM DOCUMENTS SHOULD BE DEVELOPED?

Please circle and comment on your preferred option: 4.1, 4.2, or 4.3. Additional comments, including alternative options, may be attached.

Option 4.1 **Develop only a provincial policy circular.**

Option 4.2 **Develop a provincial policy circular and policy guidelines for all curriculum areas as determined in Issue 2.**

Option 4.3 **Develop a provincial policy circular and policy guidelines for selected curricular areas. Please list your suggestions.**

Comments on Preferred Option

Other Comments

ISSUE 5: BENCHMARKS

Context

- The policy circular, The Formative Years, 1975, and other primary/junior policy documents outline provincial aims and learning expectations
- The 1987 Speech from the Throne indicated the government's intention to establish new provincial benchmarks to develop more effective ways of measuring student achievement against these benchmarks, and to ensure that parents receive more detailed information on their children's progress
- The Ministry of Education intends to develop provincial benchmarks that will describe critical learning outcomes that students are expected to demonstrate at a given point in time
- Provincial benchmarks will be premised on broadly accepted understandings of how children learn
- Provincial benchmarks will be developed in collaboration with school boards, federations and other associations
- A Provincial benchmark program will enable the Ministry of Education to develop and refine provincial curriculum policy relating to student performance needs

ISSUE 5: FOR WHICH POINTS OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING IN THE FORMATIVE YEARS SHOULD BENCHMARKS BE IDENTIFIED?

Option 5.1

Benchmarks identified for the end of the Formative Years

Option 5.2

Benchmarks identified for the end of the Primary Division and the end of the Junior Division

ISSUE 5: FOR WHICH POINTS OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING IN THE FORMATIVE YEARS SHOULD BENCHMARKS BE IDENTIFIED?

Please circle and comment on your preferred option: 5.1, or 5.2. Additional comments, including alternative options, may be attached.

Option 5.1 **Benchmarks identified for the end of the Formative Years**

Option 5.2 **Benchmarks identified for the end of the Primary Division and the end of the Junior Division**

Comments on Preferred Option

Other Comments

ISSUE 6: PROMOTION POLICY

Context

- The Education Act, Section 236, states that it is the duty of the principal, "subject to the revision of the appropriate supervisory officer to promote such pupils as he considers proper"
- Promotion policies for elementary schools vary from school board to school board. Practices can vary from school to school depending upon the judgement of principals and supervisory officers
- It is expected that school programs facilitate continuity and consistency from The Early Years, through The Formative Years and into The Transition Years
- There is a current interest in promotion practices
- The First Report of The Select Committee on Education recommends that "age appropriate promotion with required remedial and preventive programs be the norm"

ISSUE 6: WHAT SHOULD BE THE PROVINCIAL POLICY CONCERNING THE PROMOTION OF CHILDREN?

Option 6.1

Maintain the present provincial policy, as stated in the Education Act, Section 236, which identifies the principal as responsible for promotion of children

Option 6.2

Amend the present provincial policies

ISSUE 6: WHAT SHOULD BE THE PROVINCIAL POLICY CONCERNING THE PROMOTION OF CHILDREN?

Please circle and comment on your preferred option: 6.1, or 6.2. Additional comments, including alternative options, may be attached.

Option 6.1: Maintain the present provincial policy as stated in the Education Act, Section 236, which identifies the principal as responsible for promotion

Option 6.2 Amend the present provincial policies. Please list your suggestions for amendment.

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Other Comments

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ISSUE 7: SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Context

- Existing organizational approaches in Ontario schools include grades, combined grades, multi grades, ungraded, multi-aged and peer-aged groupings. Different school organizations present different challenges and opportunities for learning

- The most familiar way of organizing children in Ontario schools at the present time is the grade system

- It is expected that schools be organized to facilitate continuity and consistency in programs and services from The Early Years, through The Formative Years and into The Transition Years

- The Report of the Early Primary Education Project, 1985, recommends flexible progression throughout the Primary Division

- The First Report of The Select Committee on Education recommends that "The ministry and boards explore alternative models of broader and more flexible divisions or units"

ISSUE 7: WHAT SHOULD BE THE PROVINCIAL DIRECTION CONCERNING THE ORGANIZATION OF CHILDREN WITHIN THE SCHOOL?

Comments are requested about the preferred direction concerning the organization of children within the school.

Option 7.1

Maintain the present direction

Option 7.2

Describe an alternative direction concerning the organization of children within the school

ISSUE 7: WHAT SHOULD BE THE PROVINCIAL DIRECTION CONCERNING THE ORGANIZATION OF CHILDREN WITHIN THE SCHOOL?

Please circle and comment on your preferred option: 7.1, or 7.2. Additional comments, including alternative options, may be attached.

Option 7.1 **Maintain the present direction**

Option 7.2 **Provide an alternative direction concerning the organization of children within the school**

Comments on Preferred Direction

Other Comments

ISSUE 8: SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR SCHOOLS

Context

- Other government ministries and local agencies have responsibility for children
- There is increased involvement of social agencies and other ministries in schools
- There is increased interdependency among school personnel, professionals and social agencies involved with children
- There is increased interministerial collaboration on issues related to children
- Ontario schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions, 1989 provides policy for Guidance for 7-12/OAC with no comparable policy for the first six years of compulsory schooling
- There is increased interest in provision of guidance to elementary-aged children

ISSUE 8: WHAT SHOULD BE THE PROVINCIAL DIRECTION CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR SCHOOLS?

Comments are requested about the preferred direction concerning the provision of support systems for schools.

ISSUE 8: WHAT SHOULD BE THE PROVINCIAL DIRECTION CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR SCHOOLS?

Please comment on the preferred provincial direction for the provision of support systems for schools.

ADDITIONAL ISSUES

Please list and comment on any additional issues related to the education of children in the first six years of compulsory education in The Formative Years. Additional comments may be attached.

THE WORKING PAPER

Please use the following four pages if you wish to comment on the working paper as a context for the issues and options. Additional comments may be attached.

1.0 THE CURRENT CONTEXT OF ONTARIO EDUCATION

2.0 THE IMAGE OF THE LEARNER

3.0 EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR THE FORMATIVE YEARS

4.0 ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING

5.0 SHARED RESPONSIBILITY IN EDUCATION

General Comments

Working Paper

June 1990

THE FORMATIVE YEARS WORK TEAM

The Ministry of Education wishes to acknowledge the contribution of the following persons who participated in the development of The Formative Years Issues and Options and Response Guide and The Formative Years Working Paper.

Through the consultation process, the Formative Years Work Team will develop policy recommendations for the first six years of compulsory education.

Elizabeth Terry (Chair)	Curriculum Policy Development Branch Ministry of Education
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EDUCATING CHILDREN IN THEIR FORMATIVE YEARS

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This working paper has been prepared as a basis for discussing those policies needed to govern the education of children in the first six years of compulsory schooling in the Primary and Junior Divisions of Ontario English- and French-language elementary schools.

1.0 THE CURRENT CONTEXT OF ONTARIO EDUCATION

Ontario's population stretches over a very large and geographically diversified area. The province is characterized by wide variations in culture, language, religion, peoples, geography and regional economy. Children in Ontario come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and for many children the language of the home is not the language of the school. Ontario educates citizens who accept the diversity and plurality of society in a rapidly changing environment and who are motivated and capable of active contributions to their world. The Ministry of Education is responsible for provincial policies that provide direction for Ontario schools. All policies are premised on equity of opportunity, free from the stereotypes of ethnocultural and racial background, language, age and gender, socio-economic status, physical or mental abilities, religious and faith preference. The Province of Ontario welcomes the diversity of cultures and acknowledges it as a source of enrichment and strength. The multicultural context of Ontario accepts cultural and racial diversity as a significant characteristic of the province's social fabric. Factors that impact on Ontario education and are reflected in its policies include the following:

- the uniqueness of each child and individual special needs
- parents and community expectations for access to quality education
- equity rights
- variety in family structures
- French and English as languages of instruction
- Native cultures, contributions and heritage
- ethno-cultural, racial, religious and linguistic diversity
- values of a democratic society
- life-long learning
- technological change
- environmental responsibilities and concerns
- changing economic context

Ministry of Education policies provide for a range of education options. Ontario's commitment to language rights guarantees each child access to quality publicly funded schooling in the English language and the French language as provided in The Education Act of Ontario and Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This entails provision of English- and French-language programs and services throughout the province for each child in both majority and minority language facilities.

Ontario provides for four publicly funded school systems.

- Public school system: English- and French-languages of instruction
- Protestant separate school system: English- and French-languages of instruction
- Roman Catholic Separate school system: English- and French-languages of instruction
- French language school boards: French-language instruction for children of both public and separate school supporters

In addition, the Ministry of Education operates provincial schools to provide residential and consultative services for children who are blind, deaf-blind, hearing impaired or learning disabled.

Provincial policies allow school systems to provide a variety of alternative schools or programs. School boards may provide education programs for pupils, including those with special needs, who are admitted to and attend residential or day programs in care, treatment or correctional facilities.

French-language Education: French-language education is intended for French-speaking children as defined under section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The French-language mandate is to promote and enhance, in a Franco-Ontarian context, the cultural and linguistic values and aspirations of its community. The French-language school, in collaboration with parents and the community, creates an ambience to achieve its mandate. The French-language school contributes to the development of a strong Francophone identity and a life-long pride in being French. It develops affinity with Francophone communities in Canada and elsewhere.

Many factors impact on French-language education. Francophones are a minority group in Ontario and are at risk of assimilation into English-language. Many of its communities are being isolated and dispersed. The communities are characterized by diverse cultural, racial, and

religious backgrounds with an increasing number of allophone immigrants and intra-provincial mobility. In planning and developing the school curriculum, all partners must consider the above factors for the benefit of the French-language children's education.

Native Education: The study of Native peoples enriches the learning experience of all students. Native students can be assisted in understanding modern Canadian society and in understanding, appreciating and developing their own identity, culture and heritage within it. All other students have the opportunity to understand and appreciate the heritage and cultures of Canada's original peoples and grow in their knowledge of Native peoples. Native parents and associations assist in ensuring that the information used is accurate in terms of history and contributes to a better understanding of their aspirations.

The Native people of Ontario are concerned that their languages and culture are being lost and that many of the younger generation can no longer speak or understand their indigenous language. One important step in the process of reclaiming and revitalizing the Native languages is the establishment of Native-language instruction classes in Ontario schools. School boards are encouraged to establish Native-as-a-second language (NSL) programs for both Native and non-Native children, when the parents of fifteen or more children want NSL instruction and a qualified NSL teacher is available. When school boards offer the program, Native languages are taught during the school day. Children may be exempted from French as a Second Language to allow enrolment in the NSL program or both languages may be studied.

Special Education: School boards are required to provide early and ongoing identification procedures to identify the educational needs of each child. Special education programs and special education services are provided for exceptional pupils. The parent may request a referral to an Identification, Placement and Review Committee that will identify whether or not the pupil is exceptional. If the child is deemed exceptional, the committee will recommend a placement in a special education program. Placement may include the regular class, with resource assistance provided by a special education teacher for part of the school day, or a special education class, either full-time or with integration appropriate to the child's abilities and interests. The teacher, often with additional support services, modifies the regular curriculum to meet the individual needs of an exceptional pupil. Parents are encouraged to be active participants in the identification, placement and review process and have the right to appeal decisions made by the committee.

Transitional Languages of Instruction: Children enrolling in programs offered by publicly funded school boards may speak a language or languages other than English or French. To assist these children to develop and maintain the competencies required by the education program, school boards may provide for the use of Native and other Heritage languages as transitional languages of instruction until children are able to learn with ease in an education program where English or French is the language of instruction.

Heritage Languages: Heritage languages are languages other than English or French that school boards offer, outside the school day, to children enrolled in their elementary schools. These can include Native languages when they are not offered as part of the regular school day. These language programs give children the opportunity to maintain, improve or acquire communication skills in another language. Since language is the primary vehicle for cultural and intercultural understanding, and expression, the program seeks to help learners deepen their knowledge of the cultural context of the chosen language of study. For some children it helps to affirm their cultural roots, and to support their values and traditions. For others it provides an opportunity to appreciate a cultural heritage other than their own while extending their language skills.

A school board is required to provide heritage language classes when a request to teach a particular language is made by the parents of 25 or more children of that board. A board may offer the classes itself or make an arrangement with another school board. Heritage language classes may be offered as part of the extended school day, in the evenings or on weekends.

2.0 THE IMAGE OF THE LEARNER

This working paper discusses the development of children for the first six years of compulsory school. Children in this age group are complex beings. They need to feel accepted and to develop a sense of personal accomplishment and well-being. Each child follows an individual pattern, pace and sequence of development. The cultural, racial and linguistic factors that are part of the social and family context contribute to the uniqueness of each child.

Children learn in a holistic and integrated fashion based on personal perceptions of the world. They are motivated by an intrinsic desire to learn and realize their potential. They are characterized by multi-faceted intelligence, learning styles, and unique thinking processes. Children are risk-takers, open and receptive to new ideas and experiences, motivated by curiosity, and endowed with imagination, and intuition. Achievement of tasks, accomplished through interactions with others and their environment, contribute to the development, self-esteem, and autonomy of the individual child.

Children are initially egocentric and grow in the ability to consider the perspective of others in their expanding milieu. As they explore their physical and social world, they develop a sense of humour and an understanding of the emotions and feelings of themselves and others. They establish relationships with others, discover leadership qualities, and become contributing members of a variety of groups. During these years children develop a personal sense of values and reference points for their individual moral conscience.

Children are active learners manifesting energy and vitality. They acquire concepts through use of sensory, perceptual and psychomotor abilities. As they refine these abilities, they develop personal organizational skills and improved facility in relating to and understanding their spatial environment.

Children, in their formative years, develop cognitive processes involving critical, analytical, logical, creative and linguistic abilities. Interacting with others, inquiring and solving problems all contribute to the acquisition and application of knowledge as well as further development of these cognitive processes. Linguistic abilities allow children to organize and communicate their thoughts. A rich language base enables learners to define themselves as part of their social and cultural reality. Creative abilities include creative talents, imagination, flexibility, divergent thinking, and self-expression.

The image of the child as a lifelong learner implies a self-motivated, self-directed problem solver. This learner is aware of both the processes and uses of learning, derives a sense of self-worth and confidence from a variety of accomplishments, experiences personal satisfaction and contributes effectively to the common welfare of society. This image of the learner is an essential consideration in the provision of education programs in Ontario.

3.0 EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR THE FORMATIVE YEARS

The Ministry of Education regards curriculum as all children's experiences for which schools and school systems are responsible. It includes the rationale and context for instruction, aims and learning outcomes, instructional strategies, instructional resources and assessment and evaluation strategies. The children and their individual ways of learning are the focus for all curriculum. Curriculum fosters the social, emotional, physical, moral and intellectual development of each child through provision of quality programs which are free from stereotyping.

The image of the learner, community expectations for quality education and curriculum aims and learning outcomes are major considerations in the provision of school programs. The school curriculum must nurture growth while providing for satisfaction, competence, integrity and joy in each child and while preparing children for effective participation in society.

The curriculum process involves planning, instructing, assessing and evaluating based on curriculum descriptions including aims, learning outcomes and benchmarks. Aims, which are included in this working paper, are general statements of the attitudes, skills and knowledge to be achieved in the education of each child.

Learning outcomes are the detailed statements, developed from program aims. Learning outcomes articulate a flexible continuum of developmental learning which allows for normal variations in the pace and sequence of children's learning. Benchmarks are statements of critical learning outcomes that students are expected to demonstrate at a given point in time. Learning outcomes and benchmarks support the design of programs that meet the needs of individual students. They are used as instructional objectives for planning. As such they aid in the assessment and evaluation of student performance by providing reference points for the range of student achievement. They also assist in reporting to parents.

The Organization of Curriculum

The classroom curriculum is organized to assist children's learning. The acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills, values and attitudes are interrelated for children. Subjects overlap and learning occurs in an integrated, interrelated and holistic manner. Classroom learning experiences in the formative years are organized to reflect this child-centred perspective.

The Ministry of Education organizes curriculum policies to support school boards and educators in planning integrated programs. This working paper has organized curriculum into four broad areas of study: Cross-curricular Learning, Learning about Self, Society and Physical Environments, Learning and Communications, and Learning in The Arts.

Cross-curricular Learning

Curriculum must address instruction along the two dimensions of cross-curricular learning and subject areas of study. Cross-curricular learning transcends traditional subject boundaries and pervades the whole curriculum. These learnings are not new subjects but are an essential part of all subjects, assisting children to think, make decisions, adapt to change, develop broad concepts, apply learning to everyday life, gain in self-worth and contribute to others. They are interwoven into the context and content of all subjects. Cross-curricular learning is integrated where it is consistent with the purpose and content of each instructional experience.

In this paper, cross-curricular learning includes thinking processes, literacy, numeracy and communications, independent learning, personal and societal values, and technology.

Literacy, Numeracy and Communication: Language is an instrument of communication essential to the development of thought, knowledge and social interaction. Increased competencies in literacy and numeracy develop reflective, skillful learners who are able to think critically and communicate effectively. It is essential that children develop abilities in literacy and numeracy in order to use oral and written language effectively in all facets of life. Through language, children reflect on experience, acquire vocabulary and develop concepts in all areas of learning.

Literacy and numeracy, in today's society, requires that children gather, process and apply information in relevant contexts. This requires using and understanding mass media. Increased competencies in all levels of oral and print literacy and numeracy are essential in the learning of all children, if they are to be contributing members of an information society. Alternative communications systems and assistive devices have extended literacy and numeracy opportunities to all learners.

Thinking Processes: Children are capable of critical, creative, logical, analytical and other problem-solving skills. Thinking skills include the ability to inquire, imagine, create, experiment, predict, see relationships and take risks. Children must develop the ability to process and assess information. Both conceptual and procedural knowledge must be developed.

Personal and Societal Values: Values shape and define human existence. Society presents many conflicting choices to children within the context of commonly held values which make our pluralistic democracy possible. These values transcend cultures and faiths, reinforce democratic rights and responsibilities and are founded on a fundamental belief in the worth of all persons. Education develops the learner's capacity to reflect, clarify, review and decide interpersonal, societal and environmental issues based on respect for self, others and the environment.

The development of physical, mental, and emotional fitness is essential to all learning. In conjunction with parents, the school helps children reflect on and develop values essential to their own well-being and the well-being of society and of the environment.

Values education includes the understanding of environmental concerns and the impact of societal decisions upon natural resources. Responsible interaction with the environment results from learning to see oneself in relationship to the environment and learning to value, respect and preserve the natural world.

The school helps children to clarify and develop their personal values, become sensitive to the values of others, recognize value conflicts, and utilize effective interpersonal and decision-making skills. A personal value system based on a positive sense of self, and respect and caring for others, must be developed within a context that reflects social ethics and individual integrity. Understanding and appreciating the important values of Canadian society, including co-operation, freedom, honesty, justice, moderation, respect for diversity, responsibility, self-discipline, sensitivity, tolerance, and an appreciation of excellence and beauty, contributes to the development of good citizenship.

Independent Learning: The pace and complexity of societal change require educated citizens who are capable, flexible, self-reliant, self-motivated and with a life-long interest and involvement in learning. This interest and involvement begins with the natural curiosity of children. Active involvement in exploring their world facilitates independent learning, problem-solving and decision-making. When children are involved in choosing their learning within an appropriate range of choices in a meaningful real-life context, they learn to reflect and

talk about their own experiences. They learn to analyze and understand problems and solutions. They become aware of the "how", "what" and "why" of learning and develop the ability to monitor their own learning. These processes will enable children to develop increasingly effective independent learning approaches and will help them become learners who are creative, motivated and confident throughout life.

Technology: All areas of learning can integrate the use of technologies including computers, information technologies, calculators, manipulatives and simple materials. Children appreciate the value and role of technologies in society when they understand and anticipate the opportunities allowed by all technologies and learn to manage them effectively. Children develop a perception of themselves as being involved in shaping and being able to manage rapid technological change. They learn to critically examine technological progress and innovation. Opportunities to use technologies and design in a variety of activities enhance the development of problem-solving, creative, analytical and decision-making abilities.

Cultural Awareness in French-language Schools: The cultural dimension of the French-language schools is supported through the promotion of cultural and linguistic activities across the curriculum. Cultural awareness programs will enable children to acquire and strengthen their cultural identity and allow them opportunities to develop their skills as future leaders in their community.

Learning about Self, Society and Physical Environments

Learning about self, society and physical environments enables children to establish their personal identity in the context of their social and physical environment. The program enables learners to establish continuity with the past, affirm present personal worth and build the capability to succeed in the future. Knowledge of oneself helps to develop personal insights and an awareness of positive and negative influences on body, mind and beliefs.

The program includes experiences which encourage children to recognize social and physical relationships within their immediate environment and gradually understand and evaluate them. Children come to recognize and accept that their self-interest must be counterbalanced by a sense of community, a concern for the physical environment and a realization that their concerns and those of the community are strongly interdependent. Development of attitudes, skills and knowledge in this area enables children to act responsibly and intelligently in dealing with their physical and social environment.

Learning about self, society and physical environments provides a content vehicle for an integrated, interdisciplinary approach to learning. Children express their personal reactions to experiments, learning experiences and their social and historical culture through experiences in the arts. Mapping, measurement and graphing skills in science and mathematics help children represent the knowledge acquired in this area of study. Health and science involve learning about the body and the environment. Knowledge of the body systems and exercise influence movement education in drama and physical education. Movement supports imaginative expression integrated with music, drama, the visual arts and dance. Development of gross and fine motor skills enhances progress and development in all other aspects of the curriculum.

Social and Canadian Studies enables children to develop and maintain their individual identities, while developing an understanding of their society, its goals and beliefs and environment. Children acquire knowledge of the values and traditions that have shaped Canada's development and begin to understand contemporary Canada. Children develop in their perception and understanding of relationships among people and their environment. As they grow and mature, their horizons expand beyond their own experiences and environment and they acquire the social skills and attitudes necessary for effective and responsible co-operation and participation in Canadian society.

Aims: Learning experiences in social and Canadian studies enable children to:

- relate their personal and family culture and history to that of the community
- learn about the cultures of different Native peoples and their role in Canadian life
- learn about the contributions of the early Canadian settlers and subsequent immigrants to the culture and fabric of Canada
- appreciate the values and traditions that Canadians hold in common
- appreciate the values and culture derived from Canadian linguistic, ethnocultural, racial and physical diversity
- develop insights into the ways in which their individual needs and wants interact with their family, community and Canadian society
- investigate the characteristics of both natural and human-made environments
- examine the use of physical environments to sustain human life
- learn to identify ways of life in their community, in Ontario, Canada, and other countries and ways in which Canada interacts and participates with other peoples of the world

- develop an awareness of law and government and the rights and duties of Canadians

Health studies promote children's understanding of the relationship between healthy behaviour and a healthy body. Physical, mental and emotional well-being is important if children are to reach their potential in all aspects of life.

Aims: Learning experiences in health enable children to:

- learn about exercise, nutrition, rest and hygiene and their effects on physical well-being.
- learn that emotions influence one's mental and physical well-being and that it is natural to experience a variety of emotional responses
- learn about major organs and systems of the body and how they work
- understand the interdependence of people and their environment and the effects of environmental conditions on health
- develop appropriate understandings regarding sexuality
- learn about the use, misuse and abuse of drugs including medicines, tobacco and alcohol
- develop the assertiveness skills necessary to resist the pressures exerted on them by both peers and adults to experiment with drugs and to protect themselves from situations that could lead to child abuse
- develop the skills necessary to recognize and avoid dangerous situations that they may face, either in their own environment or in unfamiliar environments
- learn the importance of safety rules at school, at home, at play and in the community

Physical Education focuses on the development, by all children, regardless of their special needs, of the fundamental movement skills required for work and leisure activities throughout their lives. It emphasizes maintenance of physical fitness and a balance of games, movement explorations, gymnastics and dance. It encourages children to consider physical activity as part of their normal daily lifestyle promoting life-long fitness. Physical education is to be experienced on a daily basis.

Aims: Learning experiences in physical education enable children to:

- develop the movement skills and the attitudes necessary to pursue a personal fitness program
- develop fundamental movement skills, co-ordination, fine and gross motor skills through a wide variety of activities

- improve their awareness of their bodies' potential for movement and improve their ability to manage their bodies in varying spaces and activities
- learn that there is both variety and quality in movement
- develop an appropriate degree of balance, strength, speed, precision and economy of effort in physical actions
- develop social interaction through partner and group activities

Science helps children to understand themselves and their relationships with others as well as with the physical environment. It helps them to be part of their changing environment, and interact with it responsibly. It includes a balance of experiences in life science, earth and space science, and physical science. It enables children to apply the learnings of science in everyday life and to develop competency and self-confidence in a society that uses and is influenced by science and technology.

Aims: Learning experiences in science enable children to:

- develop attitudes, skills and knowledge through studies of life science, earth and space science and physical science
- develop attitudes of open-mindedness, objectivity, accuracy, thoroughness, perseverance, safety-mindedness, curiosity and risk-taking
- create, invent and construct, investigate and experiment, in the context of scientific applications
- appreciate the beauty and value of their natural physical environment
- investigate, discover, understand and explain patterns and relationships within both natural environments and those created by human hands
- enhance self-concept through an understanding of the physical environment
- develop a positive attitude toward the conservation of natural resources and a respect for all living things
- develop the values, attitudes, skills and knowledge required to make informed decisions about living in and using the environment
- develop awareness and appropriate skills in the use of simple technologies
- respond constructively to changes effected through science and technology
- appreciate the scientific and technological contributions of Canadians

Learning and Communications

Communication is essential to the development of thought, knowledge and social interaction. Language and mathematics enables children to receive, interpret and express ideas, attitudes and feelings by representing experiences and developing problem solving and information processing abilities. Development of communications abilities, literacy and numeracy begins with the knowledge children already have and develops from the child's need to communicate with and about the world in a variety of contexts. The communications program provides children with opportunities, in relevant and meaningful contexts, to use language and mathematics for discovery, creativity and continued learning.

Opportunities to develop children's language and mathematics abilities exist in every area of curriculum. The language processes of listening, speaking, reading and writing are totally integrated with each other and with all subjects. Early concepts in mathematics develop from the child's language. The learning expectations in measurement, statistics and graphing overlap in science and mathematics. Studies in communication provide interactive opportunities for children to compute, measure, graph, read, write and talk, use media, drama, art, music and technology. Mathematics and language arts are relevant and meaningful when their development and application is to real-life needs and other areas of studies.

Mathematics allows children to understand, analyze and communicate both qualitative and quantitative ideas about their environment. Mathematics begins with active manipulation and discussion of the child's world. It enables children to represent this world by models and symbols and to apply the rules and operations for working with these models.

Aims: Learning experiences in mathematics enable children to:

- reason and problem solve using a variety of processes in every day situations
- appreciate that logic permeates all areas of mathematics
- communicate and express mathematical ideas and data in the language, representation and notations of mathematics
- justify discoveries and generalizations about mathematical ideas using a variety of techniques
- use manipulatives, calculators, computers and other technologies as tools in the development of mathematical ideas and problem solving
- demonstrate understanding of the relationships involving space and shape through manipulation and verbalization

- use spatial concepts and relationships in the every day world and describe movements of plane and three-dimensional figures
- measure length, area, volume, mass, money, time, angles and temperature by progressing from direct comparison to standard metric units of measurement and applying these measures in their environment
- understand number concepts and use the appropriate computational operations for whole numbers and decimals
- understand common fractions and their use in simple calculations
- use a variety of mental calculations and estimation techniques to arrive at approximations and verify results

Language Arts develops confidence as well as competence in using language for thinking, learning and communication. Talk is a major form of learning and print literacy is essential for effective functioning in children's daily life at home, school and in the community. Studies in media literacy increase children's understanding, enjoyment and response to media in their own lives. The language arts program provides the necessary foundation for future learning.

Aims: Learning experiences in language arts enable children to:

- use their own language and experiences as a base for developing linguistic skills
- extend the communication processes of listening and speaking to develop social talk, scripted talk and talk for learning
- develop the literacy strategies necessary to obtain meaning from print
- read and respond to a wide variety of literature, expository and environmental print for enjoyment and information
- understand that writing can be used for many purposes and audiences and that these determine the form and language of the writing
- understand and use writing as a process involving pre-writing experiences, draft, revision, editing, and publishing with a focus on content, organization and style
- develop aesthetic and critical skills in viewing and responding to graphics, video, film, television, electronic and computer technologies, radio, recorded music, books, newspapers, magazines and other media
- understand and use a variety of media and technological formats as a personal vehicle to compose, create, respond and present

French as a Second Language (FSL) helps children in English-language schools to develop their basic knowledge of French. It increases appreciation of French as a major cultural element in Canadian life and provides opportunities for children, who have the interest and ability, to achieve a meaningful level of bilingualism.

French as a second language must be offered through core and may be offered through extended or immersion French programs. Children in English-language schools receive instruction in core French every year beginning in the Junior Division. School boards and provincial schools may offer core French in the earlier years. In the extended French program, children develop French-language skills not only through the study of language arts but also through one or more subjects taught in French. In immersion programs, children develop French-language skills through the study of French language arts and two or more other subjects taught in French language.

The integration of second language programs with other areas of study, provides children with additional motivation to make meaningful use of the second language within the school context. The degree of integration varies with the type of program. When FSL instruction incorporates activities and themes from other areas of study, it provides opportunity for steady advances in knowledge and skills. The teaching of both the French- and English-language programs as a single complementary program allows similar activities to serve several purposes and to reinforce one aspect of learning through another.

Aims: Learning experiences in FSL enable children to:

- develop listening and speaking skills prior to the development of reading and writing skills;
- develop communication through the integration of listening, speaking, reading, writing and viewing skills;
- interact with French-speaking people;
- develop an understanding of the culture and institutions of French Canada and the French-speaking world

English as a Second Language (ESL) and English Skills Development (ESD) familiarizes children with the Canadian linguistic and cultural milieu while maintaining pride in their own traditions and their positive sense of self. It supports children in developing the language fluency required to function effectively in the life of the school and the community.

Aims: Learning experiences in English as a Second Language/ESD enable children to:

- acquire the language skills and knowledge needed to adjust and participate in all aspects of school life
- develop, using a transitional language where appropriate, a fluency in English-language based upon their own experiences and needs
- develop oral fluency as a foundation for reading and writing
- use skills in English and apply these language abilities in other areas of study.

Learning in The Arts

The arts contribute to the fulfillment and potential of every child by facilitating personal and creative expression. The arts offer alternative ways to think, to understand and to express concepts. The arts program includes experiences for children that encourage perception, exploration, discovery, problem-solving and personal response. It stimulates children to extend and enrich their appreciation of beauty, to nurture their creative spirit, and to express themselves through dance, drama, music and visual arts. The arts contributes to the development of aesthetic growth and critical sensibilities through both self-initiated and teacher-directed experiences which foster life-long leisure and work pursuits in the arts.

Dance, drama, music and visual arts are a means of communication and expression which complement and foster activities in all other areas of study. They facilitate personal and imaginative response to content learning. The arts are highly interrelated with each other and experiences in one aspect often utilizes the skills of other art activities. Skills and knowledge in the areas of pattern, symmetry, creation of models, investigation of sound, notation and rhythms of music are examples of the interdependence of the areas of communications and learning about self, society and physical environments.

Dance provides a link between psychomotor, cognitive, creative and affective development. It allows children to use movement as an alternative form of personal expression, learning, and communication. While dance is a separate component of the arts, it also forms a part of the physical education program for children in the formative years.

Aims: Learning experiences in dance enable children to:

- explore concepts of space, form and rhythm in order to develop a sense of how their body feels and moves
- express and communicate their personal experiences and relationships through the exploration and creation of simple movements and patterns
- develop techniques and control in physical movement
- experience contemporary and traditional forms of dance for enjoyment.
- interpret existing forms of dance to create new ones

Drama helps children become aware of self, of others and of their environment. Through drama, children experience another's perspective and style of feeling and thinking. They explore these perceptions, express and communicate feelings, emotions and ideas through movement and speech, and they exchange views about their experiences. Drama, unlike theatre, focuses on exploration not performance.

Aims: Learning experiences in drama enable children to:

- develop a sensitivity to words, speech, gesture and movement in order to express and communicate using both verbal and non-verbal language
- explore the varied capabilities and use of voice, body, space and time
- develop interpersonal and problem-solving skills through working together, sharing ideas and respecting others' points of view
- co-operate with others and develop empathy by role playing, mime and improvisation
- enjoy various forms of drama through active participation
- develop critical response to live theatre and film performance

Music is a source of personal enjoyment and expression. Children learn about different forms of music and cultivate their own taste. They begin to appreciate the power of music to stir and express human emotions and moods.

Aims: Learning experiences in music enable children to:

- develop a sensitivity to rhythm, mood, movement, timbre, sound, melody, form, pitch and harmony

- participate in a variety of musical forms that include voice, sound games, movement, musical instruments, and electronics and computer technologies
- enjoy singing and become familiar with a wide repertoire of songs
- listen to different kinds of music composed by others
- create their own music through personal and group singing, playing and experimentation
- communicate feelings and ideas through the use of music created by themselves or by others
- begin to learn the language and notation of music as a means of communication

Visual Arts permits the expression and representation of personal responses to the environment through the making of images. It enhances children's sensitivity to the beauty of natural and created objects. Visual arts encourages self-communication and response to others and the environment.

Aims: Learning experiences in visual arts enables children to:

- explore and create through a variety of art media and technology
- explore conventional techniques for handling art media and create new ones
- learn the language of visual arts to describe what they experience and create.
- create images and artifacts that communicate and interpret their experiences
- develop an awareness, sensitivity and appreciation of their own artistic creations, and those of others
- perceive qualities of form, such as similarities and contrasts, textures, patterns, rhythms, line, mass, space and colour in natural and manufactured objects and materials

4.0 ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING

Assessment and evaluation of children's learning is an integral part of the education process. The assessment and evaluation of outcomes, which provide the feedback needed to make sound educational decisions, relate directly to the aims, learning outcomes and benchmarks of the instructional program. Assessment is the non-judgmental collection of observable data relating to the abilities, needs, interests, learning styles and achievements of the child. Assessment provides the information needed for evaluation. Evaluation is the interpretation of the assessment data and the making of judgments about the child's achievements, needs and program.

Assessment and evaluation are required in the curriculum process for planning, implementation and modification of children's programs. Planning instructional objectives involves consideration of the aims, learning outcomes, benchmarks, the context of learning and the developmental capabilities of each child. Instructional experiences are planned and implemented to achieve these objectives. Assessment of both individual children's achievements and instructional strategies allow the teacher to evaluate and make decisions about the overall improvement of classroom programs. Benchmarks can be used by teachers in the assessment and evaluation process to confirm children's individual progress and as such should not be viewed as fixed stages or levels which all learners must attain in exactly the same sequence or point in time. Modification in classroom programs may involve enrichment or remediation. The process of assessment, evaluation and modification may affect the whole class, an instructional group or an individual child and may occur over a whole term's work, a unit of work or a single lesson.

Provincial assessment and evaluation policies are outlined in circulars, curriculum guidelines and support documents and are an integral part of the provincial review process. The ministry intends to develop a provincial benchmark program to improve the quality of education by placing a greater emphasis on assessing student performance. Benchmarks are statements of critical learning outcomes that students are expected to demonstrate at a given point in time. A provincial benchmark program will enable the ministry to develop and refine provincial curriculum policy relating to student performance needs. Performance levels in relation to benchmarks will be monitored through the provincial review process. Using benchmarks, comparisons will be made, on a provincial basis, between student opportunities to learn and student performance. The results of these comparisons will lead to the refinement of Ontario

curriculum policy. School boards, using the results of provincial reviews, will revise local programs and assessment and evaluation procedures.

School boards will establish early and ongoing identification, assessment and evaluation procedures to identify a child's level of development, learning interests, strengths and needs. The process starts at first registration for school in the early years and continues throughout the formative years as part of a continuous assessment and program planning process. Record keeping, to document the information in the early and ongoing identification process, is maintained and updated throughout these years. The principal, other school staff, school board personnel, special education staff and community resource personnel also assist in the assessment and evaluation process. This enables other perspectives on an individual child's progress and needs and allows for the utilization of specific expertise.

School boards and schools must work together to develop coherent policies for record-keeping of children's progress, reporting to parents procedures, instructional grouping and promotion practices. These policies must be communicated to all partners in education.

Each partner in the educational process utilizes assessment and evaluation information. The classroom teacher employs both formative and summative strategies in the instructional process. These facilitate evaluation of children's achievements, diagnosis of instructional needs, planning of programs and effective communication with parents and learners. Formative strategies involve the continuous collection of information to evaluate children's ongoing accomplishments and needs. Observation, conferencing, work files, portfolios and other formative assessment strategies are used to review each child's emotional, social, intellectual and physical development. Summative strategies measure the child's achievements and development at a given time, such as, at the end of a unit of work, term, or school year.

Children are active participants in the assessment and evaluation process. Children can reflect and report on their own efforts and achievements and those of their peers. With teacher guidance, they can maintain work files and portfolios and are capable of self-reflection, analysis, decision-making and problem-solving related to their learning achievements and needs.

Parents are partners in this process. Parents contribute information regarding their child's interests, abilities, needs and accomplishments. Parents require accurate and concise information about programs, progress, achievement of learning expectations, strengths, and needs of their children on a regular basis. Parent-teacher communication, through regular conferences,

meetings, classroom visits, informal exchanges of information, and written reports, fosters an open, trusting and collaborative relationship between the home and the school.

Teachers, principals and school board administrators use assessment information for a number of interrelated purposes. These include diagnosing student needs, placing students in appropriate programs, detecting trends in the performance of individual students or group of students, developing and refining programs that meet the needs of the school, assessing the professional development needs of the staff and providing instructional resources.

5.0 SHARED RESPONSIBILITY IN EDUCATION

Education of children in the first six years of compulsory schooling demands a sustained effort of collaboration among all partners. All partners have particular expertise and abilities that contribute to quality education and the successful achievements of children in their formative years. Schools, school boards, and the Ministry of Education share responsibility with children and their parents. The experiences of young children, at home and school, influence self-esteem and develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge basic to future learning. Provision of a flexible learning environment enables children to acquire the capacity for life-long learning necessary in a changing social, economic and technological society.

Educational planning occurs at the ministry, school board, school and classroom level. While the ministry articulates goals and provincial policies, it is the responsibility of school boards through their supervisory officials to develop local programs that reflect ministry policies while addressing local priorities. School staffs and individual teachers, under the leadership of the principal, develop plans to address school and individual classroom requirements. Classroom programs are planned to reflect the needs, interests and abilities of students within the context of provincially and locally established purposes and priorities. Teachers organize the learning environment so that each child experiences success and develops self-confidence. The teachers' partnerships in the shared educational process ensures continuity and quality in children's educational progress.

The Ministry of Education has the responsibility for providing provincial policies and direction. These allow all children access to quality education programs, facilitating optimal development in literacy, numeracy and all other aspects of learning. Policies and direction for education in Ontario are developed by the Ministry of Education through consultation and collaboration.

Positive school and community relationships are an integral part of the support system for children, facilitating a common sense of purpose and enhancing education programs. Communication among the school, parents, social agencies, and the extended community is vital in, addressing the needs of the child, establishing a mutually supportive learning environment and providing flexible use of resources. The diversity of community expectations and the expanded needs of society require that the school and the community be a resource for each other. It is expected that each child will develop within the context of the community benefiting from the expertise, resources and talents of all community members and that the community will benefit from the facilities of the school.

Children's earliest learning takes place at home. As they grow, their learning environments expand beyond the home to the community and the school and involve many other people in the learning process. Parents can help their children reflect on and develop values essential to their own well-being and that of society. The attitudes, expectations and support of their parents influence how children learn. Children's progress and achievements are enhanced when parents help develop positive attitudes to school attendance and school-initiated learning experiences. Parents collaborate with the school through their communication with teachers and principals as their children progress from the early years through their formative years into the transition years. Sharing their expectations as parents and informing teachers and principals of their children's needs, interests and concerns enables the school to accommodate their children. Parents can share their talents, skills and experiences to assist with curricular and co-curricular activities. They can also help the school convey information to other parents and the public about programs and services offered and the successes children are experiencing.

In co-operation with educators and peers, students are encouraged and guided to be responsible in their approach to learning. Students can participate in the planning of classroom activities. With guidance, they can manage their own learning, organize their time and resources, set personal goals and modify those goals to varying circumstances. They participate in both instructional and co-curricular activities and work both independently and collaboratively. By applying their knowledge, skills and attitudes to experiences in everyday life, they increase their personal commitment to their learning. Students could participate in the evaluation of self, peer and group activities. With guidance, they can assess and evaluate their efforts and progress and share in the communication of programs and achievements to their parents.

School law describes the responsibilities of students in the educational process. They participate in generating school rules and are responsible for following those rules. They must be conscientious and punctual and respecting the property of others. Students develop self-discipline and are expected to make decisions, take action and be responsible for the consequences. By accepting and respecting the differences and rights of others, they contribute to the common good of school and community.

School boards, through the leadership of trustees, directors, supervisory officials, principals and other administrators, have the responsibility to formulate policies that reflect local priorities within the rationale of provincial policy. Boards are responsible for continuity and consistency in the provision of quality programs and services for children in their formative years and for resources and procedures for managing change in the school system. The school board assigns

appropriate staff to address the needs of the children and the schools. It promotes and arranges in-service activities that focus on the enrichment of educational beliefs, practices and use of resources.

School boards facilitate school, parent and community co-operation in creating a vision for education in their school system and for sharing it within the community. School boards inform parents and the community about the purpose and benefits of education programs and they invite public participation. They assist schools in their school and community relationships and in developing as a community resource. School boards are required to construct child-care centres in new elementary and secondary schools. Where possible, school boards are encouraged to make space available for these centres in existing school buildings.

The elementary school, through the leadership of the principal, translates the policies outlined by the ministry into an integrated and balanced program that is relevant to its students and consistent with the school board's vision and policies for education. School staffs, both as individual teachers and as a collective body, under the direction of the principal, organize the space, facilities and resources of the school, for the provision of quality programs and for the use of the school as a community resource.

The principal is the curriculum leader, manager of the school and a major link between school, school board, and community. The principal has specific leadership responsibilities for the organization of the school, curriculum programs and community relationships. The school staff plans, organizes and implements programs collaboratively. This allows co-operative definition of goals and objectives as well as sharing of resources and strategies. Planning for transitions from the early years through the formative years and into the transition years of schooling allows for continuity in children's educational experiences.

Schools organize classroom groupings that respond to the special characteristics and needs of children in the formative years. Existing organizational approaches include grades, combined grades, multi-grades, ungraded, multi age and peer age groupings. Different school organizations present different challenges and opportunities for learning.

The school staff co-operates with parents and the general community and utilizes ongoing communications such as newsletters, school advisory committees, parent organizations and information and special events nights. The school, in informing its community about policies and programs, facilitates understanding and support of children's educational experiences. Community agencies, community members, and parents assist the school in, meeting the needs

of individual children and providing support for the curricular and co-curricular activities of all children. These partnerships benefit the education of each and every child.

The principal, classroom teachers and other school staff have specific responsibilities in the educational process and in organizing the learning environment. The following chart outlines these responsibilities.

PRINCIPAL AND STAFF:	THE TEACHER:
Climate	
• provide a school climate that welcomes children, supports learning, fosters collaboration with parents and reflects community diversity.	• provides a safe, stimulating classroom environment, reflecting the school atmosphere and respecting individual learners.
• establish a climate for excellence where children's achievements are encouraged and celebrated.	• challenges each child to attain personal excellence in a wide variety of activities by involving children in decision-making and encouraging personal goal setting.
• facilitate the use of the school for co-curricular activities, child care, heritage languages programs and as a community resource.	• provides support, encouragement and guidance for children's participation in co-curricular activities.

PRINCIPAL AND STAFF:	THE TEACHER:
Assessment and Evaluation	
• assess and evaluate programs, services and resources on a regular basis.	• assesses, evaluates and modifies classroom programs.
• implement board policies to develop a school procedure for early and on-going identification of children's learning needs.	• uses the procedures of early and on-going identification to ensure appropriate instruction for each child.
• maintain records of individual children's programs, achievements and progress.	• maintains records of individual children's programs, achievements and progress.
• facilitate staff-parent communications	• reports and communicates to parents about children's achievements and programs.
• assist in co-operative assessment and evaluation of children.	• observes, assesses and evaluates children's achievement relative to learning expectations and benchmarks.
• engage in co-operative staff evaluation and supervision strategies	
Resources	
• establish a network of human resources within the community.	• utilizes the human resources of the community.
• foster a resource-based learning approach to implement school curriculum.	• utilizes resource-based learning in partnership with the teacher librarian.
• acquire and organize classroom and school resources that allow for a wide variety of learning activities.	• acquires and utilizes a variety of materials including manipulative, concrete, symbolic, print, non-print, technological and media-based.
• organize space and facilities flexibly to utilize the resources of both the school building and the outdoor areas.	• provides for flexible use of space within a variety of environments.

PRINCIPAL AND STAFF:	THE TEACHER:
Planning	
• plan by division to ensure continuity and communications within the primary and junior divisions.	• adapts divisional plans to foster continuous assessment, integrated curriculum and shared decision making.
• plan for and use time in flexible ways that reflect and support children in their learning styles and tasks.	• organizes and integrates learning into broadly based units of instruction, without fixed periods or times and provides for curriculum balance on a weekly or monthly basis.
• facilitate organizational and program change through school-based planning, ongoing discussion and mutual support.	• manages the change process in the classroom through flexibility in ideas and attitudes and personal professional growth.
Implementation	
• provide programs, services and resources to meet the needs of all children in co-operation with school, board and community resource personnel.	• provides programs based on assessment of each child's strengths and needs and developed in co-operation with other school staff and community agencies.
• engage in professional development to assist in program planning and implementation.	• provides a variety of appropriate instructional strategies that include both teacher- and child-initiated activities, reflective of children's learning styles.
• organize the primary and junior divisions to facilitate continuity and consistency in programs and services.	• organizes flexible work groups of varied size, reflecting children's abilities, needs and interests.
• facilitate transitions for children from the early years, through the formative years and into the transition years.	• communicates with other teachers to facilitate continuity of educational experiences.

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